

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-30

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DRAFTED BY EUR/IB:JMSMITH:MS

APPROVED BY D - THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

EUR/IB - MR. RABENOLD

UR - MR. STABLER

S/S - MR. LUERS

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R 111917Z FEB 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON

S E C R E T STATE 027412

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PO

SUBJECT: AZORES BASE NEGOTIATIONS

1. DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH CALLED IN AMBASSADOR THEMIDO FEBRUARY 8 TO INFORM HIM OF USG DECISION ON GOP REQUEST FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT. MR. RUSH SAID THAT, AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN HAD TOLD THEMIDO, WE CAN GO AHEAD WITH P-3S AND NAVAL SONAR, BUT THAT OTHER ITEMS PRESENT SERIOUS PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY IN CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS. HOWEVER, WE ARE PREPARED CONSULT WITH KEY CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS REGARDING SUPPLY OF SEA SPARROW AND HAWK MISSILES. WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT THE CONGRESSIONAL REACTION WOULD NOT BE SUCH AS TO LEAD TO LEGISLATIVE ACTION WHICH WOULD PREVENT US FROM GOING AHEAD. ONCE THESE CONSULTATIONS ARE BEGUN, NATURE OF PORTUGUESE REQUEST MIGHT BECOME PUBLIC. THEREFORE WE WOULD NOT WISH TO APPROACH CONGRESS WITHOUT GOP CONSENT.

2. MR. RUSH SAID WE COULD NOT RESPOND FAVORABLY TO THE PORTUGUESE REQUEST FOR RED EYE MISSILES BECAUSE TO DO SO WOULD JEOPARDIZE OUR EFFORTS TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIETS TO PREVENT THE PROLIFERATION OF THIS TYPE OF MISSILE, SOME

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OF WHICH (SA-7 STRELA) HAVE BEEN USED AGAINST PORTUGUESE

AIRCRAFT IN AFRICA. WE SAW NO CHANCE THAT THE CONGRESS WOULD GO ALONG WITH THE SUPPLY OF RED EYE MISSILES, C-130 AIRCRAFT OR ANTI-TANK WEAPONS BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT BE JUSTIFIED AS NEEDED TO REPEL EXTERNAL AGGRESSION.

3. THEMIDO REPLIED THAT P-3S AND SONAR NOT OF PRIORITY INTEREST TO GOP BECAUSE NOT RELATED TO IMMEDIATE DEFENSE NEEDS. GOP HAD MENTIONED SONAR ONLY AS POSSIBLE SUBSTITUTE FOR EXCESS PROPERTY WHICH PORTUGAL HAD NOT RECEIVED UNDER CURRENT AGREEMENT. WITH RESPECT TO SEA SPARROWS, THEMIDO SAID PORTUGUESE NAVY HAD ASCERTAINED IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT ADAPT THESE MISSILES TO EXISTING PORTUGUESE VESSELS. GOP THEREFORE WISHED TO MODIFY ITS REQUEST TO INCLUDE SIX ASHEVILLE CLASS VESSELS, EQUIPPED WITH MISSILES, IN PLACE OF MISSILES ALONE.

4. THEMIDO SAID HE WOULD REPORT OUR DECISION TO HIS GOVERNMENT AND INFORM US OF REACTION. PERSONALLY, HE FELT GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT. OF THE ITEMS PORTUGAL NEEDED FOR URGENT DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS USG WAS PREPARED TO CONSIDER ONLY TWO. HE FEARED CONGRESSIONAL CONSULTATIONS WOULD TAKE UP THREE OR FOUR MONTHS, AFTER WHICH WE WOULD INFORM HIM THAT CONGRESS WOULD NOT ALLOW US TO DO ANYTHING.

5. MR. RUSH ASSURED HIM THAT CONSULTATIONS WITH SELECTED CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS WOULD NOT TAKE VERY LONG. HE CONCEDED, HOWEVER, THAT WE COULD GIVE NO GUARANTEE AS TO WHAT THE CONGRESSIONAL REACTION WOULD BE.

6. THEMIDO SAID HE FAILED TO UNDERSTAND WHY WE COULD NOT PROVIDE C-130S. HE ARGUED THAT RED EYES AND ANTI-TANK WEAPONS WOULD NOT BE USED AGAINST INSURGENTS SINCE THEY HAVE NO TANKS OR AIRCRAFT. THESE WEAPONS COULD ONLY BE USED IN CASE OF INVASION FROM A FOREIGN COUNTRY.

7. MR. RUSH POINTED OUT THAT C-130S WOULD BE USED TO TRANSPORT TROOPS AND COULD BE USED IN SUPPORT OF INTERNAL COUNTER-INSURGENCY ACTIVITY. HE DID NOT BELIEVE CONGRESS

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WOULD AGREE TO PROVIDE THEM OR THE RED EYES AND ANTI-TANK WEAPONS.

8. THEMIDO ASKED WHETHER WE HAD FOUND IT POSSIBLE TO MEET PORTUGAL'S REQUEST BY DELIVERY THROUGH THIRD COUNTRIES. MR. RUSH REPLIED THAT THE CONGRESS HAD ENACTED LEGISLATION REQUIRING ALL THIRD-COUNTRY TRANSFERS OF U.S. ORIGIN EQUIPMENT TO BE REPORTED TO

THE CONGRESS. LEGALLY IT WOULD BE THE SAME AS TO SUPPLY
DIRECTLY FROM THE US AND WE WERE NOT THEREFORE PURSUING
THIS CHANNEL FURTHER. KISSINGER

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